

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Northwood Primary School

Northwood Place, Erith, Kent DA18 4HN

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 July 2025

Outcome

Northwood Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Catherine McNulty. This school is part of the Trinitas Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Simon Godden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dr Paul Wright.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy attending this friendly and welcoming school. They say that the teachers are kind and caring, and that they are 'always there for you'. Relationships between staff and children are warm and positive. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe.

The school promotes the importance of respect and integrity in all aspects of school life through the 'respect tree'. Pupils sing the Northwood school song regularly. It reinforces key aspects of the 'Northwood way', including togetherness, equity and being rights-respecting. Pupils behave very well, both in class and around the school. This starts in early years as a result of clear routines and procedures.

The school has high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well in many parts of the curriculum. However, the school recognises that it needs to provide more time in the school day for pupils to learn the full curriculum regularly and in a structured way.

Pupils benefit from a very wide range of opportunities for leadership and responsibility. They can become assembly leaders, lunchtime leaders, well-being champions, rights respecting ambassadors and house captains. Through these roles, pupils make a real and positive contribution to the life of the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children get off to a positive start in the early years. There is a strong focus on developing children's communication and language skills. Children learn nursery rhymes and explore stories in depth. In mathematics, practical experiences and a focus on vocabulary support children's understanding of key concepts. This develops further as pupils move through the school.

Reading is an increasing priority. Pupils begin learning phonics as soon as they start at school. Staff have the training they need to deliver phonics lessons well. Where pupils fall behind, interventions are well planned and support pupils to catch up. The school's new 'reading spine' puts books at the heart of the curriculum. The school also organises regular visits to the local library and will open its own in-school library soon. All of this is helping pupils to develop a love of reading.

The school has designed a broad and balanced curriculum that meets national expectations. It has thought carefully about what pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. Typically, teachers explain learning well and check pupils' knowledge carefully. This helps them to address any mistakes or misconceptions quickly.

The school's 'embedded learning' strategy supports pupils to remember what they learn. For example, in history pupils were able to talk articulately about the significance of Robert Peel and Isambard Brunel in the Victorian era. In art, pupils in Year 5 were able to talk knowledgeably about Esher's use of tessellation and optical illusion and Constable's paintings of rural landscapes. However, in some subjects, the school does not ensure that pupils have sufficient time in lessons to learn what is set out in the curriculum in depth. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Staff are knowledgeable about how to support pupils who face learning barriers, including those with SEND. They identify pupils' needs swiftly. The school supports pupils who join the school throughout the year, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English. Typically, all groups of pupils make effective progress through the curriculum.

The school has clear systems in place to manage attendance and punctuality. It works closely with families to remove any barriers that might prevent pupils from attending school. This means attendance is high. The school has high expectations of pupils' conduct and behaviour. Pupils rise to these expectations. Around school they are mature and polite. In lessons they are motivated, engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. Disruption is rare.

Pupils' wider development is well considered. Personal, social, health and economic education is well organised. Pupils learn about relationships, cultures, and faiths. The curriculum helps them know how to stay safe and healthy, including online. Pupils are clear in their view that everyone should be respected for who they are. However, the number of educational visits and extra-curricular opportunities at the school is low. As a result, pupils do not have as many opportunities as they should do to explore their talents

and interests. They do not develop their cultural understanding or extend their subject knowledge as fully as they could.

Staff feel well supported by the school and the trust. They appreciate that their workload is taken into account when decisions are made. Staff feel able to approach the school leaders and believe they will get the support they need.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of foundation subjects, the curriculum is not implemented in an organised and detailed way. In these instances, some pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge and understanding they need to be fully prepared for the next stage of their education. The school should ensure that pupils have sufficient time devoted to all curriculum subjects to enable pupils to learn the intended curriculum deeply.
- The school does not consistently and extensively promote students' personal development. As a result, pupils do not access as many opportunities to develop their talents and interests or deepen their cultural understanding as they might. The school should ensure that all pupils consistently benefit from a wider, richer set of experiences than those currently provided.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the third ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Northwood Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2011.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144540
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10379166
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr Paul Wright
CEO of the trust	Simon Godden
Principal	Catherine McNulty
Website	www.northwood.bexley.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs its own breakfast club.
- The school currently does not use any alternative provision for any of its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, members of the school senior leadership team, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector also met with trust leaders, including the chief executive officer and the school improvement and development director, as well as a member of the trust board and local governing body.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and met with some staff.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to pupils' wider development, behaviour and attendance. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and during breaktime.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christian Hicks, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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